

MUSIC AND COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA:
THE IMPACT OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING NATION

Undergraduate Research Honors Thesis

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Abstract

Throughout history, music has been used to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas that are rooted in cultural perspectives. Since Jamaica declared its independence from England in 1962, violent crime, drug trafficking, poverty, and an unstable government have plagued the country. Consequently, Jamaica perhaps has struggled to create a unified national identity separate from that of the colonial system. Music, as it is with any culture, has been an invaluable entity in helping to define the people of the once colonized nation. However, scholars point to a disconnect between the cultural music of Jamaica (e.g., ska, reggae, dance hall, et al.) and the music that is taught in the schools.

This project, which I began in January 2014 in Mandeville, Jamaica, sought to assess Jamaican music culture, evaluate public school music education, and determine the role of music education in Jamaican society. Data were collected through direct participation in Jamaican schools, community activities, and interviews. By working with the international volunteer organization Projects Abroad, I was able to teach music at a local area high school and interview nine community members with varying backgrounds about the role and importance of music and music education to them, their communities, and Jamaica as a whole. Results suggest varying opinions on the state of music education in Jamaica and the implications it has on the whole community. The Jamaican government views music as a subject that can be used to enhance math and literacy, yet many participants felt the subject matter fails to connect with the students on a personal level. Results of this study elucidate music education at an international level and show the importance of culturally relevant music education.

Introduction

Jamaica is a country with a rich history. After seizure by England in 1655, the abolition of slavery in 1834, and eventually complete independence from the British in 1962, the struggle to create a unified national identity separate from the colonial system has been plagued by violent crime, drug trafficking, poverty, and an unstable government (CIA World Fact Book, 2015). As it is with any culture, music has been an invaluable entity in helping to define the people of the once colonized nation. The popular music forms of Mento, Ska, Reggae, and Dancehall have been, and continue to be, used as social platforms to express thoughts, ideas, and social and political commentary about the lives and experiences of the Jamaican people (King, 2002). Music is described as a way for Jamaicans to “counteract oppression and degradation. In fact, music is one of the few avenues for the Jamaican poor both to create a distinctly black Jamaican identity and to vent years of pent up suffering” (King, 2002, p. xiii).

It would be reasonable to assume the state of music education is comprehensive and complete in a country so deeply rooted in its culturally specific music; however, upon further review of the subject, this assumption is not accurate. Although there is extensive research into the history, creation, and distribution of Jamaican music (e.g., Chang & Chen, 1998; Salewicz & Boot, 2001; Borrow & Dalton, 2001; King, 2002), Jamaican music education remains an area of research that has not been thoroughly explored (Mundle, 2008).

Much of the research on Jamaican music education is written in conjunction with the then-newly revised curricula (e.g., Tucker & Bowen, 2001; Tucker, 2003). The most recent publications assess music education in a comprehensive format (Mundle, 2008) and provide a history of Jamaican music education (Tillmut, 2014), but do not explore certain aspects of curriculum development and implementation, community engagement in public school music

programs, or student generated data. Findings from these studies suggest that the music being taught in the schools is incomplete. Notably, these researchers indicated that music classes were rooted in the western-classical tradition (a vestige of colonial rule and influence) and had little to do with the culture of Jamaica, specifically¹.

At the turn of the 21st century when many of the Jamaican educational documents were being re-written, music began to take a more prominent and comprehensive role in the curriculum. The introduction of the Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) in 1999 led the way in changing how music was represented in the public school system:

The introduction of a Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC)...marks the beginning of significant changes in primary music. The new thrust aims to broaden the curriculum by involving children in composing and listening and appraising, in addition to performing (Tucker & Bowen, 2001, p. 4).

Subsequent documents assert music in the primary schools is largely performance-based and often involves the entire class singing folk songs and religious music or playing the recorder (Mundle, 2008). Aside from the occasional inclusion of some folk songs in the classroom, there has been little improvement in the primary curriculum in terms of a holistic approach to music.

Until the publication of the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Music Curriculum nearly concurrent with the RPC, music in secondary schools had been ill defined and was essentially non-existent. Factors including supply of properly trained teachers, understaffed schools, and “the absence of a shared understanding of the aims and content of secondary music” all contributed to an unfavorable situation (Tucker & Bowen, 2001, p. 6). Thus, the ROSE curriculum was published with the goal of providing a standard for all secondary schools to

¹ Until the revised curricula were implemented in the late 90s and early 2000s, school music programs had been strictly referred to as ‘Singing.’ The subject was shaped by the British 19th century choral tradition and promoted the development of musical literacy and vocal skills (Tucker & Bowen, 2001).

follow. The document details educational goals for grades 7-9 (also referred to as “forms 1-3”) and attempts to provide for students who did not have music at the primary level:

In an attempt to compensate for the absence of music teaching in many primary schools, the Grade 7 curriculum, in particular, includes materials and activities that should more ideally have been part of music education in primary schools. It is necessary, therefore, that teachers regard the Grade 7 curriculum as a needed foundation for further study (ROSE Curriculum Guide, 2000, p. 2).

Simultaneously, teachers were expected to provide a course of study that prepared grade 7-9 students for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) in Music. This is an intensive two-year course for 10th and 11th grade students (“4th and 5th forms”) that concludes with an examination given by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

Because of the scarce number of publications concerning Jamaican music education, it is timely and fitting that an updated assessment of the subject be conducted. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine both music education and culture in the Jamaican city of Mandeville and to assess how the two inform each other and influence music’s place in the schools as well as the community. Given the aims of this investigation, a case study methodology was employed. Although the methodologies used in this study were largely based on a qualitative data collected in an ethnographic case study format, the information presented can elucidate the need to continually advance the status of music within the school curriculum.

Methodology

The data collection process lasted for a period of 12 weeks (January – April 2014) in which I volunteer-taught music in three Jamaican schools, observed classroom dynamics, and interviewed key stakeholders considered to be data rich sources. As a participant-researcher, I was better able to gain a comprehensive understanding of Jamaican culture and music education and sought to answer the following questions, which served as a guide for the study:

1. What type of music education were the students getting through the school curricula?
2. Does educating students in the subject of music influence the community?
3. To what degree does the community influence music education programs?

The first goal of my fieldwork was to assess the type of music education the students were receiving – in part to determine whether Mundle’s (2008) and Tucker’s (2001, 2003) claims regarding the focus and implementation of music instruction were still prevalent. Specific questions guiding this stage of the fieldwork centered on:

- What were students learning in the classroom?
- What types of music were being taught?
- What pedagogical techniques were Jamaican teachers utilizing?
- Did students find the curriculum to be engaging and pertinent to their interests?
- Were curriculum guides sufficient or did teachers find it necessary to supplement their lessons with their own curriculum development?

The second goal of the fieldwork was to observe and assess the interaction between music education programs and the community. Specific questions framing this phase of the inquiry included:

- What was the relationship between music education and community dynamics at school, city, and national levels?

- Did Jamaican music education provide a means for students to connect with and understand their cultural heritage?
- If the community (school, local, and national) influenced the music programs, in what ways did it do so?

I employed two methods of data collection to uncover answers for these guiding questions: observations and interviews. Observations of students and teachers were conducted in three different public school settings – two primary schools and one secondary school² – where participants were involved in normal classroom activities. Information pertaining to the research questions was recorded in the form of researcher field notes. Other information about demographics, classroom resources, classroom dynamics, and student-teacher interaction was recorded to provide a more complete overview of the classroom environment.

Interviews were conducted with nine subjects of varying backgrounds who fit one of the pre-determined demographic categories:

- Community members with no direct affiliation with music education ($n = 3$)
- Students enrolled in music classes ($n = 2$)
- Students not enrolled in music classes ($n = 1$)
- Music educators ($n = 3$)

Provisions were made for school administrators to be interviewed but there were no participants. Snowball sampling procedures were employed to identify key stakeholders considered to be data-rich sources. Data centering on stakeholders' opinions and beliefs about the intersections of music culture in Jamaica and music education were collected. Topics of discussion included the goal of music education, curriculum, the importance of music in the schools, and community

² In Jamaica, students spend six years in primary/elementary school, grades 1-6, and five at the secondary/high school, grades 7-11 (also referred to as "1st– 5th form").

dynamics and support for music programs. For a complete list of interview questions, see appendix A.

Results

Observations and interviews conducted during the course of the study served to answer the research questions and create a more comprehensive understanding of music education in Jamaica. The information presented in this section focuses first on the three schools in the study, including data on the public school system, demographics, and classroom resources. An overview of curriculum guides, results of the practiced curriculum, and the level of student engagement follow. The section concludes with a presentation of the interaction between music education programs and the community and the importance of music education perceived by the nine interview participants.

Research question 1: What type of music education were the students getting through the school curricula?

The Schools

All three of the schools that participated in the study were located in suburban areas within fifteen minutes of Mandeville. In a more densely populated region such as Mandeville, enrollment in schools was primarily based on results of standardized tests. In addition, proximity determined a set of schools for students to attend based on commute times and access to transportation. Thus, the socio-economic status of each school's student population varied greatly. When students entered grade one they were grouped by academic ability through a system known as tracking³ and oftentimes had little opportunity to switch to a higher-achieving track. In grade six all students took the Grade Six Achievement Examination (GSAT), which was

³ "A process of assigning students who have similar ability levels to specific groups, classes, or a program of study. Proponents of tracking indicate that it enables students to maximize their potentials in the classroom, while opponents argue that the criteria used for grouping students is too narrow and often biased. In addition, opponents feel that tracking results in low self-esteem, poor motivation, and negative attitudes toward learning for some students" (Ely & Rashkin, 2005, p. 466).

used, in part, to determine where they would attend high school. The results of the GSAT were also used to continue ability-grouping tracks at the secondary level.

At the two primary schools, students in all grade levels received music instruction once a week for a maximum of thirty minutes regardless of grade level. Grade seven students at the high school had music class twice a week for a maximum of forty minutes, while students in grades eight and nine met only once a week for forty minutes. Music was compulsory through grade nine at this high school. Students in grades ten and eleven were enrolled in the specialist program governed by the Caribbean Examinations Council music syllabus. These classes met twice a week with one 80-minute block and one 120-minute block.

Each school had a unique set of resources. One primary school had a designated music classroom with desks, a white board, and classroom sets of music textbooks. The other primary school had class outside in the school parking lot under a tree and had two rows of benches for students to sit. Students were often cramped due to limited seating and the learning environment was very distracting for the students and the teacher. If it rained, music class was held in the students' home classroom but it was not a "favorable alternative." Classes in this school were in one large warehouse-like room and were divided by partitions, which made music learning difficult.

Both schools had many instruments including recorders, hand drums (e.g., congas, bongos), accessory percussion instruments (e.g., triangles, tambourines, shakers, maracas), and keyboard instruments (e.g., piano, electric keyboard) due to their involvement in the "Music – Perfect Pitch for a Sound Education" initiative sponsored by First Global Bank, a private banking company in Jamaica. The high school had its own classroom but was small for the number of students it needed to accommodate in grades seven to nine. The room was set up like a

traditional classroom with rows of desks facing the front of the room. The school owned some instruments, including a drum set, electric bass, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, piano, electric keyboard, various hand drums (congas and bongos), accessory percussion instruments (tambourines, triangles, maracas) and recorders. The room had a whiteboard and was equipped with technology including a computer with wireless Internet access, high-quality speakers, and a projector.

Class sizes at the primary level averaged 30-40 students per class. Enrollment at the high school ranged from 40-50 students per class in grades 7-9. There were 21, grade 10 students in the first year Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) class and 6, grade 11 students in the second year CXC class. Only three students in the second year course regularly attended class.

The Curriculum

The Revised Primary Curriculum (RPC) (1999), The Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Music Curriculum (2000), and the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Music Syllabus (2009) were used to guide music instruction at the primary and secondary levels (ROSE for grades seven to nine and CXC for grades ten and eleven).

The RPC did not provide a defined music curriculum for grades 1-3. Instead it was expected teachers would integrate music into the classroom by using it as a means to teach other subjects. Participant 9, a music educator, explained, “For instance if you are doing a unit about families, you’re supposed to find a way to teach concepts surrounding families using music.” If a teacher was creative, he or she could incorporate a lesson about families of instruments but “music teachers in other schools might not do it like that.”

There was a defined curriculum for grades 4-6, but “when the children reach...grade 4 and they have to do discrete music, they might not be as prepared to take on some of those things

because it is really left up to the teacher to make sure that what ever activities she planned in grades 1-3 prepares their listening skills, things that have to do with rhythm, [and] instruments.”

The two primary schools that were a part of this study had full-time, properly trained music teachers on staff. Observations of their classrooms indicated that much of their teaching was largely performance driven and was used as a means to enhance students’ math and reading skills. Some Jamaican folk songs were included, but they were ancillary to songs that stressed concepts of simple arithmetic or proper grammar. When asked how much of the official curriculum was incorporated into the primary schools, participant 4, another music educator, answered:

It depends. I teach grades 1-6. For grades 1-3 I tend to use topics from their other subject areas – maths, language, integrated studies. Then usually we make up a song and then we use that song to give them the basis for the lesson. For grades 4-6 I tend to do that, but also incorporate elements of music and instruments including recorder and the conga drum. It’s both - a little of mine for the lower grades and then elements of music for the upper grades.

Participant 9 responded:

I stick very closely to the standards as they are. In terms of the types of music that I integrate, I try to expose the children to a lot of what is Jamaican because believe it or not they don’t know. They might hear the dancehall and the reggae a lot but in terms of the traditional styles like the folk music and the mento -those kinds of things - they’re not really exposed to those. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of material that music teachers can easily access.

In both cases, the teachers supplemented the curriculum in ways that met the needs of their students.

The ROSE Music Curriculum outlines music instruction for students in grades 7-9 and is the first document that treats music as a stand-alone subject. It focuses on performing, listening, and composing to learn about music rather than it serving the extramusical goals of improving performance in other disciplines. It also recognizes the importance of the cultural music of

Jamaica and claims, “Schools should play a significant role in cultural education, and because music is an important part of our culture, schools should be responsible for how the art form is experienced and understood by the young” (ROSE Curriculum Guide, 2000, p. vii).

Observations at the high school in the study revealed music classes for students in grades 7 and 8 (“first and second form”) were largely performance and music theory based. Students learned to play music on recorders and had fundamental music theory lessons that helped them read music on the treble clef staff. The lessons were mainly rooted in the western classic tradition and had little content related to Jamaican music. Music classes for grade 9 (third form) students included units for the history of Jamaican music, more advanced music theory (e.g., beat, melody, harmony, form), and some instrumental performance opportunities on percussion instruments. Participant 8 said when planning lessons “I include Jamaican music because we are dominated by that and that is what the students are attracted to....but I have to find a way to infuse a little bit of classical. Maybe I would have to find a dancehall song that samples classical music to get them interested.” This teacher was able to cover a varied range of music topics and could create a comprehensive curriculum.

In grades 10 and 11 (“fourth and fifth form”), students chose the subjects they wanted to take to prepare for the end of the year Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) Assessments. The CXC program for music was an intensive two year program that required students to be proficient on an instrument, demonstrate understanding of advanced music theory and aural skills, compose an original work, and arrange an existing piece. The CXC syllabus was congruent with what a first semester music student at the university level in Jamaica would be expected to do. Participant 8 says schools that participate in the CXC music program “will

reinforce the national standards because in order to do the program, you have to meet the national requirements. That is the only way you can get the students to pass the national exam.”

Research Question 2: Does educating students in the subject of music influence the community?

Student Enrollment, Engagement, and Class Dynamics

Although music was compulsory for students in grades 1 to 9, Participant 8 noted this varied across the island. Depending on location of the school, human and financial resources, and educational philosophies, schools and students were not necessarily bound by this requirement. Many schools had only two years of music at the secondary level and some schools did not offer a music program. Students in grades 10 and 11 took music only if they decided to take part in the CXC program.

Student engagement during music class varied between the different grades and the different track levels. Observations revealed that students at the primary level had difficulty focusing on the material and retaining the information from class to class. This was especially true for the students who had class outside in a parking lot. Students at the high school sometimes showed interest, but often were “off task.” More discipline problems were noted in the lower achieving tracked groups than the higher achieving tracked groups. The relationship between academic achievement and behavior in the classroom was not examined any further in this study. All students in grades 1-9 exhibited difficulty with retaining information from the previous class.

There was evidence to show that students could become uninterested in the topics and musics being used in the classroom. Participants 5 and 6, both music students, claimed the music they studied and analyzed in class sometimes bored them; however, Participant 2, a student who used to be enrolled in music classes, said the music covered in class was interesting.

Community Perception of Music Students

When asked if educating students in the subject of music influenced the community, there were mixed answers from the interviewed participants. Some community members claimed only music students at the university level made an impact on the community. Others said it allowed students to transcend cultural and social boundaries to work together in an ensemble setting to make music. Another noted the extramusical benefits of how studying music enhanced analytical skills and made individuals more rounded and better able to contribute to the community in meaningful ways. One teacher said it impacted the community greatly since Jamaicans are “naturally musical.” Other teachers said only the CXC students made a noticeable impact in the community in relation to performing outside of the school setting. Despite the wide range of answers, nearly every participant cited positive interactions between the community and students involved in music programs.

Research question 3: To what degree does the community influence music education programs?

The Importance of Music Education

All interview participants were asked to rank the importance of music education on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not important and 10 being extremely important. Results showed a difference of opinion between community members who had no direct affiliation with music education programs and that of music teachers and students.

Two of the community members ranked music education at a four. One claimed, “it is important because it gives persons options...but to say it is a compulsory sort of thing, for me personally, no.” Another cited the Ministry of Education and how “outside of the core subjects,

music and physical education were two subjects that schools could choose which teachers they prefer based on budgetary considerations.”

Because it was not a required subject at the national level, music was viewed as a luxury rather than a necessity. Participant 8 noted some schools value music only when there were functions or performances where student-musicians were needed to enhance a particular event. Music educators gave similar answers when commenting on the general opinion of music education.

The other seven participants all ranked music education at an 8 or higher. Some justified its presence in the school system for extramusical reasons:

If [music] is incorporated or integrated into the different subject areas, I’m sure you would see marked improvement in subject areas such as literacy or math or science. Because here you can use a song to teach a particular topic within science, math, geography, and it probably sticks more than a teacher just [talking about it].

I really think that I have seen students improve. The school has a program going where we have seen how it improves literacy and numeracy. Sometimes they are taking a test or participating in class and are singing the songs to remember the concepts that were taught.

Additional responses were related to musical and cultural reasons. Participant 9 stated, “It is a part of our culture. And if it is a natural part of our culture, it should be part of our education.” Students enrolled in music classes placed a higher value on it because they wanted to pass the CXC music exam and become good musicians.

The Goal of Music Education in Jamaica

In response to the question, “What is the goal of music education in Jamaica?” two themes emerged. The most common response was to use music as a means to supplement “math and literacy” learning and to provide a rounded focus in all subjects. Participant 8 stated music could “enhance students’ learning capacity and capability” in music and in other school classes. The

second response was related to music as a career option. Due to the vocational nature of the school system and the structure of the CXC classes, music in the schools also served as career preparation if students wished to enter into the music industry after graduation.

School Community

It was noted that the internal school communities often influence the particular focus of the school music programs were utilized. Participant 9 said the school choir is often asked to sing for scholastic and community events. There was a lot of support from other teachers in the school and some of them wrote songs for the choir to sing. Students at the high school level participated in the national choir competition and played in the school band. Every morning for devotion (an assembly that began the school day), music students would provide praise and worship music and the music for the Jamaican National Anthem.

Local and Government Communities

Some students enrolled in music classes (especially at the CXC level) were taking private lessons or had learned from family members or friends in their church communities. These students were typically the strongest and most successful in the subject.

In October 2011, the Ministry of Education and First Global Bank of Jamaica began the “Music – Perfect Pitch for a Sound Education” initiative. The program sought to integrate music classes into the curriculum in six primary schools with the goal of increasing students’ math and literacy skills (Patterson, 2011). First Global Bank provided classroom resources including instruments, equipment and other materials, and sponsored teacher workshops. The Ministry of Education provided additional training and monitored the progress of students. At the conclusion of its pilot year, “90 per cent [*sic*] of students from the schools originally involved in the program had seen a marked improvement in their literacy and numeracy skills” (*The*

Gleaner, 2014). Since its inception, the initiative expanded to twelve primary schools across the island. This was the first instance of an organization outside of the Ministry of Education taking an interest in Jamaican music education.

Discussion

Curriculum

Results from observations, interviews, and a review of national curriculum guides including the Revised Primary Curriculum (1999), The Reform of Secondary Education Music Curriculum (2000), and the Caribbean Examinations Council Music Syllabus (2009) show that efforts to have been made to incorporate a comprehensive music curriculum into Jamaican schools. However, the curriculum is inherently disjointed and incomplete. Because the RPC does not provide a defined course of study for grades 1-3, teachers are forced to create their own curriculum. Without defined learning targets at the beginning levels of primary school, students are not always ready to meet the goals set fourth in the grade 4, 5, and 6 curricula guides.

Participant 9 recognized the lack of a defined curriculum as an issue in the schools:

It is really left up to the teacher to make sure that what ever activities she planned in grades 1-3 prepares [students'] listening skills, things that have to do with rhythm, instruments, that kind of thing. So if it was a discrete subject from grades 1-3, I think they would be better prepared to do it in grades 4, 5, and 6. So the standards are somewhat lacking.

While it is important for teachers to supplement the curriculum to meet the individual needs of their own students, having standardized learning targets in grades 1-3 to guide instruction would greatly aid student learning.

Due to the recent trend of using music to supplement learning in math and literacy at the primary level, learning goals intrinsic to music have become secondary. This is problematic for two reasons: music is inherently treated as a utilitarian, accessory subject (thus contributing to the social stigma that music education is unimportant) and the goals of the curriculum do not prepare students to properly matriculate into the secondary ROSE music curriculum (where students are expected to be successful with learning objectives intrinsic to music). Thus, students

in grades 7-9 are learning remedial music concepts that would be better suited in a primary school setting. Playing recorders, singing folk songs, and learning how to read music should be introduced to students before they reach high school. The ROSE curriculum guide itself claims that part of the 7th grade curriculum “should more ideally have been part of music education in primary schools” (ROSE Curriculum Guide, 2000, p. 2).

The remedial nature of the ROSE curriculum made it extremely difficult for students to obtain a Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate through the Caribbean Examinations Council at the completion of their high school education. Over the course of two years, students seeking this distinction were expected to be proficient on an instrument or voice, take a music theory and aural exam, write an original composition, and arrange an existing work. Many students who enrolled in the program found that the amount of work was overwhelming and many students dropped out in the second year. At the high school that was a part of this study, 21 students were enrolled in the first year CXC music course and only 6 were enrolled in the second year CXC music course (3 of whom attended class regularly). Although the teachers did their best to supplement the curriculum to ensure student success, the innate lack of a common focus for the curriculum, across all levels, obviously contributed to a lack of student achievement.

School Structure

One more measure of the value schools placed on music education was the amount of class time devoted to music instruction per week. It was very difficult for students to retain information and build upon previously learned skills when they only had class one time a week for thirty minutes. Participant 9 commented that “[for] the kind of things you want to do in a music class, I think [the period] should not be less than 45 minutes.” At the bare minimum, fifteen additional minutes would allow for teachers to spend more time on review so the students

could learn more information. Ideally, students should be having class a minimum of two days a week. Additionally, the study revealed that the grading scale was extremely lenient:

- A: 85-100
- B: 70-84
- C: 50-69
- D: 25-49
- E: Under 25

Research has shown that students tend to perform better when they are held to higher grading standards (Elikai & Schumann, 2010). Student achievement in the subject could potentially increase if a stricter scale were to be employed.

Community Interaction

Observations and interviews suggested the greatest relationship between the community and music education programs was the Ministry of Education and First Global Bank's "Music – Perfect Pitch for a Sound Education" initiative. Although the focus of the program was to use music as a means to increase student performance in other subject areas, it is noteworthy that an independent organization was taking an interest in music education. Given the brief history of a defined music education curriculum on the island (which began when the RPC and ROSE curricula were published), it is fair to say that this initiative is a step in the right direction towards justifying music's purpose in the school system. Mundle (2008) claimed in his dissertation that some teachers lacked formal training and were not well qualified to teach music. Because First Global Bank has sponsored teacher training workshops and seminars, more teachers have had the opportunity to gain the proper knowledge and skills needed to teach the subject. If music education is to grow in Jamaica, more opportunities for professional development must continue to be offered to educators.

Students enrolled in the CXC classes were expected to make the greatest impact on the community in relation to music performance outside of the school setting. Participant 8 noted many of the CXC students go on to become professional musicians who “broaden their scope of musical genres and listen to musics from around the world” to better inform their understanding. Other music students were observed performing in choral and instrumental ensembles at their respective churches and religious centers. School communities sometimes benefited from having a music program when music was needed for a competition or a school function. For example, the high school in this study had a praise and worship band that played at morning devotion three times a week and a choir that competed in the national choir competition.

Summary and Conclusions

The quality of music education programs is inherently linked to the value judgments the school, community, and government place on the subject. Although some of Mundle’s (2008) claims about inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and an unsupportive national government still hold true, results of this study suggest that the state of music education in Jamaica is improving. The schools that were a part of this study had properly trained educators, adequate resources, and supportive administrators. Improvements regarding physical classroom space (i.e., providing a room for the school that had class in the parking lot) and allotted class time could easily be made at the local level. The more challenging changes that need to be made lie within creating a unified and comprehensive music curriculum from grade 1 through grade 11 that has well defined and coherent musical goals, objectives, and student outcomes.

Additional studies that examine a larger number of school music programs and student populations are needed to further extend these findings and assist in creating a newly revised music curriculum for Jamaica. As Mundle suggests, “Systematic research assessing the state of

music education in Jamaica will help to detect strengths and make suggestions for improvements, and guide [policy makers] in addressing the needs of music programs in the country,” (Mundle, 2008, p. 164). As music education improves in Jamaica, so too should its governing documents and standards.

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Appendix A

Research Methods and Activities: Interview Questions for Each of the Specified Groups

Interview Questions for Community members with no direct affiliation with music education

1. What is the goal of music education in Jamaica?
2. Are you aware of the Jamaican National Standards for Music Education?
3. How much of the teacher's curriculum should be based off of the Jamaican National Standards?
4. Is music education secondary to other subjects taught in the school (like maths or science)?
5. On a scale of (1) to (10) - with (1) being not important to (10) being extremely important – how important is music education to the curriculum?
6. What genres of music should be incorporated into the curriculum?
7. Is there a disconnect between the music taught in the schools and the cultural music of Jamaica?
8. Does educating students in the subject of music influence the community?
 - a. If so in what ways?
9. Is there a significant, positive difference in community dynamics for the students engaged with music in the schools as opposed to those students who are not engaged with music in the schools?
 - a. If so, what is that difference?
10. How does the community influence the music programs in the schools, if at all?

Interview Questions for Students Enrolled in a Music Class

1. What type of music do you like to listen to?
 - a. What is your favorite band, singer, or music group?
2. What type of music do you learn about in school?
 - a. Is it different from the music you listen to outside of class?
 - b. Do you like the music you learn about in class?
3. Do you play any instruments or sing outside of school (at home, in a community program)?
4. Does your music class help you understand popular and cultural music of Jamaica?
5. On a scale of (1) to (10) - with (1) being not important to (10) being extremely important – how important is music class to you?

Interview Questions for Students Not Enrolled in a Music Class

1. What type of music do you like to listen to?
 - a. What is your favorite band, singer, or music group?
2. What type of music did you learn in school?
 - a. Was it different from the music you listened to outside of class?
 - b. Did you like the music you learned in class?
3. Do you play instruments or sing now?
4. Do you understand popular and cultural music of Jamaica even though you aren't in a music class?
5. On a scale of (1) to (10) - with (1) being not important to (10) being extremely important – how important is music class in school?

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What is the goal of music education in Jamaica?
2. Is music education secondary to other subjects taught in the school (like maths or science)?
3. Should music be taught as a means to reinforce other subjects or should it be taught as a subject in and of itself?
 - a. Is there any gray area?
4. How are the Jamaican national standards for music education viewed in the public school system? How much of your lesson planning is based on the national standards?
5. Tell me about your lessons. Do they incorporate the national standards? What genres of music do you teach?
6. What are some of the pedagogical techniques you use for your lessons?
 - a. What benefit does it have to the students?
7. Is there a disconnect between the music taught in the schools and the cultural or popular music of Jamaica?
8. Does educating students in the subject of music influence the community?
 - a. If so in what ways?
9. Is there a significant difference in community dynamics for the students engaged with music in the schools as opposed to those students who are not engaged with music in the schools?
 - a. If so, what is that difference?
10. How does the community influence the music programs in the schools, if at all?
11. On a scale of (1) to (10) - with (1) being not important to (10) being extremely important – how important is music education to the curriculum?

Interview Questions for Administrators (Not fulfilled in this study)

1. What is the goal of music education in Jamaica?
2. Is music education secondary to other subjects taught in the school (like maths or science)?
3. How are the Jamaican national standards for music education viewed in the public school system?
4. Should music be taught as a means to reinforce other subjects or should it be taught as a subject in and of itself?
 - a. Is there any gray area?
5. What genres of music should be incorporated into the curriculum?
6. Does some of the music taught in the classroom distract from a communal sense of Jamaican identity (for example, does teaching western classical music hinder students in defining a unified national identity separate from the colonial system)?
7. Is there a disconnect between the music taught in the schools and the cultural or popular music of Jamaica?
8. Does educating students in the subject of music influence the community?
 - a. If so in what ways?
9. Is there a significant difference in community dynamics for the students engaged with music in the schools as opposed to those students who are not engaged with music in the schools?
 - a. If so, what is that difference?
10. How does the community influence the music programs in the schools, if at all?
11. On a scale of (1) to (10) - with (1) being not important to (10) being extremely important – how important is music education to the curriculum?

Appendix B

Interview Transcriptions

Participant 1 - Community member with no direct affiliation with music education
Feb 27, 2014

M: In your words, what is the goal of music education in Jamaica?

P1: Well the truth is I've never really thought about it before now but I think it's really to give students a career option just like any other subject (accounting, economics). "Do you want to follow that career path or not?"

M: Are you aware of the Jamaican national standards for music education?

P1: No

M: So you have never heard of them before?

P1: No

M: If I told you that they were in existence, what do you think they would contain? What should be in them?

P1: Well I think it would relate to what the guide for the subject that's being taught in the schools so whatever it is. In terms of what instruments they should learn. What the theory should be like. That's what it would guide.

M: When you think of music as an academic subject, do you think of it as secondary to subjects like math, English, science or do you think they are on the same level?

P1: Personally no. I've never thought of them on the same level. I mean I think if I had probably done music up to a certain level then maybe I would have considered it as such. But based on what you see, you see music as maybe an... it's an art – and so it's not seen as you know, if you're good in music you're not seen as being "oh, so intelligent" because if you're good in science it's not the same effect.

M: If you had to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not that important with 10 being extremely important, how important is music education in the schools?

P1: For me personally or for the schools?

M: Your opinion

P1: In my opinion, maybe on a 4. I think it's important because it certainly gives persons options. If that's where your interest lies then I mean, music for me is a talent. For me it's not

something that you can learn. You have to have some sort of inclination towards it so I think it should it remain in education system for that purpose of persons who are so inclined. But to say it is a compulsory sort of thing, for me personally no.

M: Some people are really good at math while others are good at science. Would you say there is some sort of predisposition to the fact they are really good at those subjects or is it something they learn along the way?

P1: I think it comes with, what would I say? I think there is some predisposition. Well, I think it probably has to do with your level of exposure and at what age. I'm thinking that persons, for example, who do very well on maths, you know they're parents are probably good at it or are encouraged to do it. They have that supporting from very, very young. So then they tend to excel and person who are very good at English I think it is the same. So with music too, you know, you tend to find those persons who parents are musicians or they have friends who do it that sort of thing. They tend to be more inclined towards it so they'll show more interest and so they'll learn more.

M: So it's an environment thing. If they're around it more then the more likely they are...

P1: Inclined to do it.

M: to understand it better and go after it?

P1: yes I think so

M: Okay. So let's talk about the actual things that are taught in the schools for music. What genres of music should be incorporated into the curriculum?

P1: Well I think if it is going to be music education, I'm thinking they should include all of the genres. I'm thinking for me personally I'm not sure what it currently entails because I did music up to second form which was Jingle bells blowing on the recorders sort of thing. I never pursued it beyond that to be honest and I don't know anybody who did. I know a person in university who did but in high school I don't know what the curriculum is like up to fourth/fifth form – what it is that they're studying.

M: Do you think it would be more beneficial to learn a broad based type of music as in studying a bit of everything rather than focusing on one thing – like you said you did a lot of recorder? Do you think it would be better to do more general stuff like a music survey rather than playing the music or do you think playing is better than the survey?

P1: Well, no. I think the theory is key because you can only teach so many songs then no more. If you're teaching recorder lessons you can only learn so many songs during the time you are in high school. So I think its better when you have the theory backing it so if it is jazz that you're doing, you know about jazz then you can decide if you want to go get an instrument and learn to play jazz. So I think that education wise it would better if you actually, I mean the practical is important but the theory is key in terms of the different areas.

M: Do you think there's a disconnect between the music that's taught in the schools and the cultural music of Jamaica like reggae, ska, dancehall, etc?

P1: Definitely. I mean you don't really find schools wanting to teach dancehall but it is what is in Jamaica. So that too sometimes becomes a problem because in terms of them teaching whether it's jazz, or what is that opera? I don't know what that's considered.

M: classical?

P1: Classical yeah that sort of thing, which is not really seen, right? You would have to travel abroad to get exposure to actually do this even after you've learned it. So which is why I'm not sure how important how music education is for Jamaicans considering we're not learning Jamaican music – the music that is actually used here.

M: Do you think that's an extension of being a part of the colonial system just 50 years ago? Is that influence making that disconnect bigger?

P1: It is because as I said if you should say that you study dancehall I mean, come on. Who is going to look at you and say "Wow! He studies dancehall!" right? But then when you say that you study classical music, then of course you're looked on as this person with skill and talent sort of thing. So yes, we try and not let it but we claim it's Caribbean, its CSEC, that sort of thing, but we are still influenced obviously by the colonial system.

M: I want to go back to the part where you said that classical music carries an 'uppity' feel where as the cultural and popular music is not viewed with respect. Seeing how that relationship happens, if people would want to study elements of reggae or dancehall it wouldn't be as prestigious?

P1: To me it is not looked upon as such. At the university level, you have the Edna Manley College (for example) where you can learn that but even then, with breakthroughs in research and that sort of thing, for me it is not looked upon with the same level of respect. It doesn't matter to which level you do it.

M: Do you think educating students in the subject of music influences the community as a whole?

P1: I don't know. At least it hasn't influenced my community. Unless it's a case where they are definitely – probably at a university level where they are playing with a band or that sort of thing, but outside of that it doesn't impact the community. Even when you look at what you probably learned in school, I mean, you're not even prepared to play, say, at a community function. So, no.

M: Would music and community go back to the idea that if the parents are involved, then the children would be involved with it too? For example, some students I have play piano or sing

at their church. Would you say that is more influenced by their family and their family values and how they view music or would it be more influenced by the school?

P1: It would definitely be more how they view music and then the family values because, as you mentioned, there are young persons who play music in my church as well; however, they have not studied it in school. So it is a matter of them showing an interest and then their parents sending them to extra lessons or that sort of thing, or them teaching themselves because of their interests in the music. It is not so much the theory that they would have learned in school.

M: Do you think there is a significant positive difference in community dynamics (i.e. how the community functions) made by the students engaged with music in the schools as opposed to students who aren't involved with it?

P1: I think that would depend on the type of community you have. In terms of community dynamics you would have some communities who put emphasis on music. Then I guess in that case that student might come in handy before another community where that is not a priority. So it would depend on whether the community is. For example, in the Rastafarian communities, definitely having musical skills is revered. But in another community like my community, it's really neither here nor there. So it depends.

M: So then would you say the community influences music programs in the schools at all or are they completely separate?

P1: I don't think it influences it in the schools. I'm thinking it influences the individuals. So it will influence the persons living within the community if they want to pursue music whether in the school or they want to have somebody teach them. I don't think people will say, "oh let us teach music because this community benefits from it" or that sort of thing, no. It doesn't have that direct impact.

Participant 3 - Community member with no direct affiliation with music education
March 6, 2014

M: What do you think the goal of music education is in Jamaica?

P3: Okay, I think the goal of music education in Jamaica is to use music as a tool – an alternative way to get students to grasp the knowledge and the information in a more practical way. And so based on my understanding a lot of music education has to do with enhancing numeracy and literacy within the schools especially at the primary level and getting the students to understand the concepts a little bit more.

M: So concepts of other subjects?

P3: No the concepts within the English language as a subject and within mathematics.

M: Right, okay. Are you aware of the Jamaican National Standards for music education?

P3: Not fully.

M: Okay. Would you be aware of some of the other standards like for science or math or no?

P3: More for literacy and numeracy (english language and mathematics) yes.

M: How much of the teacher's curriculum do you think should be based off of the national standards?

P3: I think the majority of it should be but leaving some leeway for the teacher to get creative. With my understanding of standards, some teachers tend to follow it to the T, while others will react based on their students because you have to understand where each student is at, what they respond to, and even though there is a generic standard, a teacher must have the leeway to diversify and change while still meeting the overall objective of the standards.

M: So, incorporate the standards but also do it in a way that the students can best learn...

P3: Best learn the concepts. So flexibility is key. It doesn't have to be following it to the T as long as the overall objectives are met.

M: Okay. Would you say music education is secondary to other subjects taught in the school like literacy?

P3: Definitely. There are no ifs, ands, or buts. There's a high focus on English language and mathematics because generally we think those are foundation subjects for any student to get ahead in life. But we've not made the connection between how other subjects are also important and how other subjects support mathematics and English. So I think that's where the disconnect is and I think that's something as an educational system we really need to address and give music a – naturally as Jamaicans (I don't see why we don't get the

connection) but naturally as a people that is how we learn. I mean if you ask any child about any jingle on the television or on the radio, they can give to you. So we need to use that natural ability that we have and use music to enhance what it is we do in schools.

M: So based on that, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not important at all to 10 being extremely important, how important is music education in the school curriculum?

P3: Um, I would say, a 4. Two years ago we were told by the Ministry of Education that outside of the core subjects, music and physical education were two subjects that the schools could choose which teachers they prefer based on budgetary considerations. So you get your core and then the school can say okay, I prefer a P.E. teacher or a music teacher. And for me, that signals that we don't take music education very important. I do not see why it can not be a part of the core in terms of teachers being there and so I would basically give it a 4.

M: So is that your opinion or is that just in general? Is your opinion informed by the Ministry's decision to make music an option?

P3: Right. That and just generally when you go into a school, what the emphasis is. I rarely go to a school and I hear okay, children are not choosing music. How can you help with that? It is always literacy and numeracy which I know is key but just generally there's not a thrust towards, you know, promoting music education.

M: Okay. Um. So let's talk a little bit more of the music that is actually being taught in the schools. What genres of music do you think should be incorporated into the curriculum?

P3: Um, this may be very unorthodox but I think all aspects of all genres of music should be included. Because each has its own unique sense of style, purpose, and rhythm, but teachers can tap into that as well to diversify their lesson planning. And so even though we are big on our ska, mento, reggae, and dancehall, I think all genres can be included for the students to basically learn while they're in school. And I think even though dancehall is a little harsh, it is something that I personally use when I train young people and it pulls a lot out of them and so I think we need to broaden our horizons and use all aspects.

M: Do you think there's a disconnect between the music taught in the schools and the cultural music of Jamaica (like you were mentioning ska, reggae, dancehall... all of those)?

P3: Yes I think so because we focus on the cultural side when it's closer to various celebrations like emancipation or black history month or Jamaica Day or something like that. But I think generally students are not fully aware and are not taught the traditional Jamaican types of music within the schools. Again, going back to the dancehall I think we move away from that because of the social commentary, which can be negative, but at the same time it can help with debates within classes, it can help to stimulate discussion for students. It gets them to be more analytical and so I think we should move away from the labeling of the dancehall music (in a way) and use it as a vehicle to really get students to really think outside the box.

M: Yeah that's good. Do you think educating the students in the subject of music influences the broader community as a whole?

P3: It sure does. It makes them more rounded individuals. I think it enhances their analytical and they're reasoning capabilities. They're able to dissect a particular song and there's rich discussion around that so I think it helps with the holistic development of the student and not necessarily somebody who perhaps writes well is good at math but this makes them a little bit more rounded which in turn impacts them as citizens within their community and they are better able to contribute and to give back in that particular way.

M: Would you say there is a difference between students who do take music and take it seriously as opposed to students who aren't really interested in music or don't have the option to take it (as some schools don't have music teachers)?

P3: Yes I think those who either don't take or don't have the option to take it would have missed out on 1, more cultural awareness, 2, a fun diversified way of teaching. Given the level of literacy in Jamaica I think that particular child (like a slow learner) would have missed a grand opportunity to develop him or herself. So I think personally every child should be exposed to or get the opportunity at some point to have music education within their curriculum. Just as how math and English is set, I think it's really a critical component. I mean research (you're doing research now) but I'm sure you've done the literature review and seen the importance of music even from being in the womb in a child's development.

M: Let's kind of flip it a little bit. Do you think the community influences music education in the schools? If so, how does it do that?

P3: When I think of community now, I'm defining it as the music fraternity (one) and the community – the entertainment community within the community (and I'll explain). So I think within the music fraternity, because of how loose, degrading, out of control, dancehall music has become, there is a resistance from music educators to really use dancehall as a vehicle within the educational system. So I think that has impacted it in a negative way. But still, lots of persons still write positive and good lyrics that can be used. The community itself, the entertainment aspect, I think it is often tied to how students are allowed to be free and be a part of the dancehall space – which you know is not for a child. And so as a parent perhaps here, you know, my child would be in a music education class and if a little reggae or dancehall would be played, automatically the association is sometimes negative. I think because of that, there is a negative connotation, especially to our type of music, being used within the school system. It's the same as the debate between patois and English. I think overall there's a greater (in my estimation) influence of how the music from the community impacts the school.

M: Okay. So do you think that part of that, sort of negative connotation of dancehall, comes from the time when Jamaica was part of the colonial system? Is the western classical music influencing the bias of dancehall?

P3: I don't really think it is influencing that aspect of dancehall at all. I think we've outgrown that. We are our own enemies right now when it comes to dancehall and we're not producing enough positive artists who are pushing the music forward. It's just the lewdness and the types of social commentary, which you can listen. I'm not a Vybes [Kartel] fan, but lyrically he's powerful. I listen to him to analyze him in terms of his content and what he's saying. It is powerful and it shows that he is a clever person. It's just the image of him and what he does as an individual and the other side of him, what he sings as an individual, are at odds.

M: Yeah, it seems to me that dancehall is often used as what I would call protest music. Sort of counterculture, 'I don't like this so I'm going to sing about it and I don't care what anyone else thinks.' And I can see how that can come off fairly strong and would discourage people from trying to teach about protest songs or the why behind the music.

P3: But the rhythm in that, the rhythm in dancehall I think is so powerful. It can transform anything you want to teach a child and I think if we can disconnect from the negative aspect within the dancehall music and think about how we can use the rhythm and the beat and get that to connect with a child, then we would go a far way. I mean, children can just create some music on spot. You give them something about English or Shakespeare, and you just knock a table, I've seen it, and they just get going.

M: Is there anything else you want to discuss about music education?

P3: Just generally I would like to see a greater buy-in of music education. I know First Global was the bank that started an initiative recently to really provide schools with the resources to support literacy and numeracy by using music. But I think the ministry can take that on a little more and really provide support especially in rural schools where that kind of support is needed and just open the debate about the importance of music education. There is not a lot of talk about it and why it is important. You hear one off quotes about it now and then but it needs to be something at the center and forefront of our strategy to improving education within Jamaica.

Participant 7 - Community member with no direct affiliation with music education
March 20, 2014

M: In your own words what do you think the goal of music education in Jamaica is?

P7: The goal of music education in Jamaica is really to have the students develop a rounded focus in all the subject areas. It's also to allow students to diversify their academic achievements and it is also to prepare students as well for the external examinations in music. And if students want to continue their study at the tertiary level then it prepares them for that as well.

M: Okay. So are you aware of the Jamaican national standards for music education?

P7: Mhmm. Mhmm. Basically the standards include an incorporation of all genres of music. The standards at the tertiary level is different from that of the secondary level and is different from that of the primary level. At the primary level the standard is to introduce the students to music education and prepare them for the secondary level. When they reach the secondary level they aim is really to prepare them for CXC's or give them exposure in the event they want to continue onto the tertiary level.

M: In your opinion how much of the teacher's curriculum should be based on the national standards?

P7: Um, because the national standard is all encompassing, it is good to have that background. However it is also equally important for the teacher to use his or her own knowledge of what the class is or the experience that he or she would have with the class knowing the students learning styles and learning abilities to incorporate other creative means into it. But for the most part it should be based on the national standard especially at the secondary level because there is a national exam that you actually prepare the students for.

M: So before, you talked about how music education is used to sort of create a well-rounded student. Would you say music is taught as its own subject in and of itself or it's used as a means to create well rounded students in the other subjects?

P7: It's used in both ways. As I said earlier, the standards are different at each academic tier. So within the primary schools it is taught as a subject and it is also used to develop other areas. For example there is a new thrust that is being introduced into the primary schools now and they are music to enhance literacy and numeracy. So what they found out is that because students gravitate to music easily or catch on to lyrics easily, then they would use topical or other subject areas such as language and maths to umm, or use music integration into these subject areas so as to enhance the academic performance in these areas. At the secondary level, it's concentrated as a subject in itself while at the same time developing other areas or developing other extra curricular areas in school. For example, at the secondary level there is a national choir competition. So you find that a lot more schools since this competition have been engaged in music education or have gotten a bit more serious in music education. So it's seen as a subject and a subject area that enhances other areas.

M: Okay. Um, so, based on that, would you say music education is secondary to other subjects taught in the school or is it on the same level as say science and math?

P7: Um, in my opinion (and this is my opinion), I see it as secondary especially within the government schools that don't place much emphasis on music. It's probably in the last ten years that schools have been concentrating a lot more on music. I went to high school in the nineties and then there wasn't so much emphasis placed on music. 'Oh, music was just another thing.' But now I realize that even at the early childhood level, students are being introduced to music so it has...it's coming into its own now.

M: So it's been changing?

P7: Yes, it has been changing.

M: Sort of gaining more prominence in the schools?

P7: More prominence in the schools, yes.

M: Okay. Good to know. So, on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not very important to 10 being extremely important, how important is music education in the curriculum?

P7: I would say it's an 8.5 to 9. Why? Because music is under estimated or the use of music in academics is under estimated by a lot of the schools. And so if it is incorporated or integrated into the different subject areas, I'm sure you would see marked improvement in subject areas such as literacy or math or science. Because here you can use a song to teach a particular topic within science, math, geography, and it probably sticks more than a teacher just saying two plus two is four or you sing it "oh! two plus to is four" that kind of thing sticks more. I think it should have that level of prominence.

M: What do you think... why has it been recently coming in to a higher... why are people focusing on it more? Why do you think that is?

P7: The literacy and numeracy level at the external examinations both at the primary and the secondary level are not as good as we want them to be. So I believe that the Ministry has as its focus early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, and in their policy making and policy changes and reviews, they have seen where music plays this important role. And not only that, the culture of Jamaica is a musical culture and they find that individuals who leave school illiterate or "semi-illiterate" are able to be some of the brightest musicians, some of the brightest DJs, the accomplished DJs. So I say, looking at that, they are probably saying if music can be integrated in the schools, it can probably enhance or elevate the literacy and numeracy levels. So it's a matter of policy reviews and changes.

M: You talked earlier about how the curriculum itself says all genres should be incorporated into the curriculum right? Would you agree with that?

P7: Yes. Definitely because you don't want to just have students looking at just Jamaican music because you are educating them for global music. So let's say at the secondary level a child just concentrates on local music. Then when he reaches tertiary level where there is greater exposure to all genres of music, then that child is at a disadvantage. So it is very important to learn all the other genres and we see the schools incorporating that.

M: Do you think there's a disconnect between the music that is taught in the schools and the cultural music of Jamaica (like reggae, ska, mento, dancehall, etc)?

P7: It's not so much a disconnect but we... I'm not seeing where a lot of our folk music is being used especially at the secondary level. Probably now it is getting a bit more exposure, but there's not so much a disconnect because they would have to use music or the integration of music and use genres that the students know, right? And then introduce them to more vintage genres to get them more rounded. So not so much a disconnect. There could be an improvement but not so much a disconnect.

M: So do you think educating students in the subject of music influences the greater community as a whole? Like makes them better citizens and so on?

P7: It does. Any practical subject improves the level of discipline. It, any performing arts or visual arts subject, improves that level of community and social interaction because it allows you to go beyond cultural boundaries because that's what music does. It takes you beyond cultural boundaries so you will find that a student who may not necessarily speak with one student in the class, coming together as a choir and do choir rehearsal. You find that kind of integration, you find that kind of togetherness. Yes, it does.

M: So would you say there's a significant positive difference in community dynamics for the students who are engaged in music in the schools verses those who don't have music classes?

P7: Um yes. There would be a difference and when you look at those students who are involved in music you would find that there is some exposure from home. So the love is kindled there and then developed at the school. You find this kind of setting more prominent in the middle class to upper class community dynamics. Not that it's not in other social strata but you find it more prominent there so there sometimes can be a difference in the community dynamics.

M: why do you think that gap sort of exists between the lower class and the middle and upper class with involvement in music?

P7: I think it's a matter of exposure. You will find that a middle class family, probably having been exposed to the importance of doing music or what music does to the mind the soul and the body, would more encourage their child to go do music or you find that persons from the lower strata are probably not able to read as much, they would not be exposed to that kind of dynamic. So it is more likely that it would not be passed on to the child.

M: Okay. Last question. How does the community influence the music programs in the school (if at all)?

P7: Hmmm

M: Would it be more of just like what you talked about earlier with parents sort of fostering an interest in the music and then the school taking that interest of the student and working with it?

P7: that's a part of it. There's also the matter of using music as a way of engaging the community. So you will find that events are planned and the community is invited or everybody watches the national choir competition and so when a school, for example the one that you volunteer at maybe, sings their entrance into the national choir competition they have gotten more community integration – more support from the community because they are watching and say “oh my god [REDACTED] is there!” and they're cheering. So you find a greater sense of community. You find community members wanting now to own the school and have it as theirs and protect it. So it does, as with any other areas like sports and so on.

M: So it's sort of a thing where the community can get behind the program and be like, “here's what we can do and we want to share it with the country.”

P7: Right. And putting [REDACTED] out there because it is not just the school, but it's the community with the school.

Participants 5 and 6 – Students enrolled in music classes
March 14, 2014

M: What Type of music do you two like to listen to?

P5: Well, I like to listen to gospel.

P6: Dancehall, reggae, R&B, hip-hop

M: Just gospel for you?

P5: Dancehall too.

M: What are your favorite bands or singers or music groups?

P5: Well I love One-Third, Bob Marley of course, DJ Malachi

P6: I have a few like Vybes Kartel, Alkaline, but my favorite artist is Rhianna

M: So can you describe what type of music you learn in class? Like styles of music or what you do in music class?

P6: today we are learning intervals, listening to and analyzing particular music. Figure out the notes, the beat, everything.

M: When you say you listen to and analyze particular music, what is the genre of music? Is it like the music you listen to at home like Dancehall, reggae?

P6: No not that but we listen to hip-hop like Alicia Keys, Bob Marley sometimes.

P5: Yes Bob Marley

M: Is the music you learn to in class different than the music you listen to at home or are there some similarities?

P5: It is the same for me. We just learn different things about it than what we would normally do at home

M: So then you like the music you learn about in class then?

P5: No, bored.

P6: Yeah I'm sometimes bored with it.

M: what parts bore you?

P5: When the teacher stops the music and I have to analyze it.

M: So you don't like it when you have to analyze it.

P5 and 6: Yes

M: So you don't like to do the work, I see. You don't like the theory but you like to listen to it and have fun with it.

P5 and 6: Yeah

M: So do you play any instruments?

P5: I play recorder

P6: I sing

M: Do you play or sing outside of class?

P6: I sing inside and outside of class

P5: Same. I play in and out.

M: Do you only practice at home or do you perform for church, other places?

P6: I sing in the church choir, sing at home, sing at school

P5: I practice at home and play in class. I sometimes play One Love for my family.

M: Do you think the music class here helps you understand popular music of Jamaica?

P5 and 6: Yes it does

P6: there are certain things that we don't know about the music and we get to learn about it in class and know it better.

P5: I love to analyze. Listening and analyzing helps our hearing in music.

M: Does it make the music more enjoyable to listen to then?

P5: It makes it more enjoyable but through listening and analyzing you are able to interpret notes, they rhythm pattern, and that kind of stuff.

M: If you had to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not important to 10 being very important, how important is music class to you. Feel free to be honest.

P5: For me it is important because we have the CXC exam and when I leave school I plan on being a singer. For me it is a 10

P6: Well music is not that important for me but I want to do it in CXC because I play the recorder and I'm good at it. For me it is a 7.

Participant 2 – Student not enrolled in a music class
March 4, 2014

M: What type of music do you like to listen to?

P2: Well, I like to listen to reggae and soul – more like jazz

M: What would you say your favorite musical group/ band/ singer is?

P2: My favorite singer is Whitney Houston and the Tabernacle Choir.

M: The Mormon Tabernacle Choir?

P2: Yes

M: When you were taking music classes (think back to primary school and here for first, second, and third form), what music did you learn in the school? Like what type of music? What did you do? Any activities?

P2: Some cultural, folk songs, reggae beat.

M: Could you give me an example or is it too far away to remember?

P2: For example, you have the songs like long time gal and other cultural songs

M: Okay. So did you use recorders or any other instruments?

P2: Drums, recorders, violin. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School so we had a lot of instruments to play.

M: that's awesome! So would you say the music learned in class is different from the music you listen to outside of school?

P2: Very much.

M: Was the music you learned in class boring to you?

P2: No.

M: You still enjoyed it too? You liked the music you learned in your class?

P2: Yes

M: Do you play instruments or sing now?

P2: I sing now. I want to play instruments but I have to go to classes.

M: do you not take music classes because of the CXC exam or is it because you want to spend more time on the other subjects?

P2: I want to spend more time on the other subjects.

M: So music to you is more of a hobby then?

P2: yes

M: Do you sing in community functions like church, or other things?

P2: yes

M: Are you in the choir at your church?

P2: Yes

M: So you understand the cultural music of Jamaica because you said you learned folk songs in primary school. And you understand popular music because you listen to it as well?

P2: Yes

M: So if you had to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not very important to 10 being extremely important, how important is music class in schools?

P2: Well for me I would rank it as 8 because now a days it is easier to get into the music business and music can take you a far way – either instrumental or vocal. So I'd rank it as an 8, for me.

M: So it's good to have that option in the school system in case you want to pursue a career.

P2: Yes, it gives you something to fall back on.

M: Do you think it would also be worth while to take music classes even if you don't want to make it a career?

P2: You can say that yes.

M: Why?

P2: I'm not quite sure.

M: You just think it's important for people to know and learn about music?

P2: Yes, if it is even the basics.

M: How important is music to Jamaica then, as a whole?

P2: Jamaica is a country that is known for reggae. The music, our music, can help us to be known wider in the world.

M: So using your music like reggae and ska and things like that...

P2: Yeah take for example Bob Marley

M: Bob Marley, yeah. So to you, Jamaican music is important because it helps spread your views and culture to the rest of the world?

P2: Yes.

Participant 4 – Music Educator
March 11, 2014

M: In general, what is the goal of music education in Jamaica?

P4: Well, I think basically it enhances the students learning capacity and ability. Some of them are better able to learn through music than even through the general concepts that we use. And therefore, I think it enhances their music and general learning

M: Would you say that music should be taught as a means to reinforce other subjects or should it be taught as its own subject in and of itself? Or is there a gray area?

P4: Both, I think both. From the couple years that I have been teaching music, I have had students say that from the music and what they have learned, they are thinking about going into the field of music. While if they are not exposed to this, maybe then fewer students would want to go in that direction. You also find that they learn a lot about their culture, and other aspects of music. I think that it can be taught as a subject in itself but maybe not so much at the primary level. But it can be used to enhance other subjects in those grades and also as a subject by itself.

M: Would you say then music is secondary to other subjects in the school (like math and literacy) or is it on an equal level?

P4: At this point, it is secondary to the other subjects. I would love to see it move up to the same level but at this point, the children just see it as a time to relax and another form of entertainment – not necessarily a subject as such.

M: Would that thought be driven by the Ministry [of Education's] perspective of music education or is it a cultural community idea? How would you describe it?

P4: More I think of a cultural/ community thing because I know that over the past maybe 10-15 years, the ministry has been trying to use music to bring it up to that level where it is considered as a subject. But the culture is still imbedded in us that we just see it as a form of entertainment and therefore it is going to take some time for that to go.

M: are you familiar with the Jamaican national standards for music?

P4: In terms of in the school setting?

M: Yeah.

P4: I know that within the curriculum, they have guidelines for each grade in terms of music, but because as I said, it is not treated as a subject, it is not at that place yet. Therefore, in grade 4, you have elements of music teaching them the recorder and all of that. However, you may not be able to do that just basic music, until they are at that place in the curriculum.

M: Based on those sheets that you told me about, how much do you plan your lessons around them? Tell me about your approach to curriculum.

P4: It depends. I teach grade 1 – 6. For grades 1 – 3 I tend to use topics from their other subject areas – maths, language, integrated studies. Then usually we make up a song and then we use that song to give them the basis for the lesson. For grades 4-6 I tend to do that but also incorporate elements of music and instruments including recorder and the conga drum. It's both where it is a little of mine for the lower grades and then elements of music for the upper grades.

M: What are some of the teaching techniques you use for your lessons?

P4: One of the things is that I try to incorporate as much as possible is their involvement. I find that when they have a part in doing it, then they tend to remember more and they apply it more. It's also most of the time reinforcement especially for the lower grades. I don't know if you heard but one student in class today said, "We did that in class!" So it is like a reinforcing where they have already been taught the concept and it helps them to cement it in music class. Research for the upper grades – they will be given projects where they have to research different topics. Another technique is group work where they will come and be given a topic and will have to give a presentation where they critique each other.

M: So it's a very student centered approach to teaching?

P4: Right, definitely.

M: Would you say there is a disconnect between the music that you teach in the schools and the cultural and/or popular music of Jamaica?

P4: To a great degree there is because they have not yet gotten the concept that music is a subject and that it is a part of your education. Most of the time they just come in and they are singing randomly or playing random rhythms. So for them, that is it and therefore (I'm not very good at the reggae) but we try to incorporate it because you find that when you do that, it sticks to them. I was doing genre of music project with grade 6 and they asked, "Why didn't we do dancehall?" We did classical, hip-hop, reggae, and mento, so you are introducing them to their cultural music along with others but they just wanted dancehall. So it is taking some time, and it will take some time, to get out of that where their interests expand outside of the popular music.

M: Does educating the students in the subject of music influence the community as a whole?

P4: In terms of their behavior? Or they just bring it back into the home?

M: Their behavior but also, I know that maybe some of them play keyboard or sing at church. Is there any community interaction happening because of music in the school system?

P4: Well, I guess maybe if it was the upper school setting, you would find more of that. But for these classes where they only have 30 minutes once a week, it would be hard to teach the students. We have extra classes for the recorder, but the students are not consistent in coming. So you will find them using it at home, the community, as you say at church, and so on. In former years we had students who would use it and play like at church, but for the past maybe two years, I have not found anybody who is that inclined to use it in that way.

M: So there really isn't that much of a connection.

P4: Not much at this point.

M: Does the community influence the school music programs? Is there any support from parents for the music program?

P4: No I have not really seen that.

M: I noticed there is a PTA here. How active is it?

P4: There is one but we have not had a meeting in a very long time. At the last meeting I spoke to them about the music program, what it does, and how it helps the students. But we have not really seen anything coming from that.

M: If you were to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not important to 10 being extremely important, how important is music education within the curriculum?

P4: My personal thought or what it is now?

M: Let's do both.

P4: Personally, I think it is very important. I would give it maybe an 8. I wouldn't put it way up to 10 yet. I really think that I have seen students improve. The school has a program going where we have seen how it improves literacy and numeracy. Sometimes they are taking a test or participating in class and are singing the songs to remember the concepts that were taught. So I know that it is important and it can help. As it is in relation to where it is now, I don't think they really see the importance. I wouldn't give it more than a 3 or 4. I really think that it needs to be emphasized more by promoting it more and showing that yes, it can help. Maybe after this study is completed, then people will understand more how music can help. And it will.

M: Do you think the lower number is because a big focus in school is high school CXC exams? Focusing on the English, math, science (subjects seen as important for success) more than other subjects?

P4: Not just at the high school level. One question I tend to ask every year of the grade 6 and their test, "do you think music is important in school or why do you think music should be taught in school?" and one answer one year from a student was, "No I do not think it is

important because we will not be getting tested on it for exams.” So as long as they’re not getting it on the major exams, then it’s not important to them.

M: That is all I have on my end. Is there anything else you want to add?

P4: Not really, but I mean just re-emphasizing that music is important. Coming up though the ages we have had music. Music has been used in so many ways to communicate and all of that. I feel like if children are exposed to music at an early age, it can help them tremendously in the other subject areas. For these children, it is secondary and they don’t always take it seriously. But, it can help. I would assume and hope that further on music will become such an integral part of the school that they will not consider anything without music being a part of it.

M: I noticed you have a lot of instruments around. Are all of the primary schools like this?

P4: There is a program that First Global Bank and Financial Services initiated where they want to see how music can help to increase the ability in literacy and numeracy so they donated a lot of the instruments. K

M: Could you comment on the state of music education in other primary schools in Mandeville? Do some have more resources? Less?

P4: Some may have more, some may have less. I know there are three schools [First Global] has focused on in Mandeville. If they are anything like us, they did not have anything of much worth before the donation. Private schools and prep schools will have more because they place emphasis on music education unlike public schools.

M: Because of the disparity between the schools and the resources they have, do you think that would cause an inherent academic achievement difference?

P4: Yes I think so because those with the resources are able to expose the students to more aspects of music. I have a daughter who just went to high school and it was evident she had an advantage because she had already learned some of the musical concepts at the primary level that other students did not have the opportunity to learn.

Participant 8 – Music Educator
March 28, 2015

M: What is the goal of music education in Jamaica

P8: The goal of music education in Jamaica focuses on two aspects. Presently music is being used as a means of teaching numeracy and literacy and also to educate and provide musicians – the highest quality of musicians that you can get in the arts. Presently the country doesn't have a large percentage of musicians, as a large number of students aren't really attracted to this area. It is not a fast going area. There are other subjects that provide quick results so students tend to do track and field or other areas where they can see immediate results. I have found that a lot of students don't like to do something that will take a long time before they see any results. Music is something that you have to practice and it takes time for you to see actual results. Most people are turned off because they want to become a professional, say, overnight so the goal is to educate them and train them as much as possible so Jamaica can take it's place in an international market and become competitive with other musicians around the world. So that is the goal of the program.

The program itself is broken down into four categories. We are supposed to be teaching listening and analysis so the students can critically assess music they listen to so they know about it. If they are arranging, they should know what they should be doing. Students should also be able to perform. And they should also be able to compose. So that is basically the goal.

M: Would you say that music is secondary to other music taught in the school like math and science?

P8: Yes it is. It is not say on the forefront. Much emphasis has not been placed on the area as numeracy and literacy. Those subjects are the number one focus – not music. It is just recently that they have implemented the program and it is on a small scale. They are trying to use music to teach numeracy and literacy and that is only at the primary school so far. It is not widespread to the secondary. Some principals however will see the importance of the program and push it in their school. In terms of budgetary support and it becoming a core course, it is not.

M: Should music be taught as a means to reinforce the other subjects?

P8: I think it should be mainstreamed just like the others because there are benefits from learning music. The discipline of rehearsing, it improves analytic skills. Even mathematics – they are using it to teach numeracy and that aspect can help students in that subject. So yes, it should be mainstreamed.

M: How are the Jamaican national standards for music education viewed in the public school system? Are they being adopted by most of the schools? Are they being ignored? What have you observed?

P8: Sometimes it is left up to the teacher more instead of the school reinforcing the national standards. Here in my school and other schools that are doing the CXC program will reinforce the national standards because in order to do the program, you have to meet the national requirements. That is the only way you can get the students to pass the national exam. We have formative and summative evaluation so the summative evaluation is the CXC exam. If the school is doing it, they will enforce the national standards. What you will find sometimes is the school inspectors and those who evaluate the schools are not usually musically inclined. So they don't really possess the ability to evaluate a music lesson and see what is actually happening. Thus, most of the time it is left up to the teacher to enforce the standards.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about your lessons? How do you incorporate the national standards? What type of genres do you teach? Etc.

P8: When I'm doing a lesson plan, I prepare with two things in mind: the stronger students and the weaker students. So some of the lessons are geared to captivate student interest. A lot of it will include Jamaican music because we are dominated by that and that is what the students are attracted to. For example if I am going to do a lesson and I put in classical music, the students might be turned off. So I have to find a way to infuse a little bit of classical. Maybe I would have to find a dancehall song that samples classical music to get them interested. For example I will use reggae music to teach a lesson and find a song that uses a trombone or saxophone so I can connect that with other forms of music. If the whole lesson uses music from another [international] genre, the students may not participate as well as they would participate with music from a local genre. At the same time, I look at the curriculum and the requirements. When we do a lesson, the students must be able to analyze, listen, compose, and perform. So that is why if I am teaching a recorder piece, I'm going to get them to analyze the music. Then I will have them perform the music, and then take the same piece, go in a group, and make their own arrangement. I also keep in mind their backgrounds and where they are coming from so I can better captivate their interests. Sometimes I record their performances and have them assess what went well, and what improvements they could make. Then when they have to do the exam in fifth form, they are able to do the program successfully and pass the test.

M: You mentioned that you do teach the cultural music of Jamaica. In other schools, have you noticed a disconnect between what they are learning in class and the music they listen to outside of class?

P8: There can be, you know. Because some of the kind of music that they want to listen to, we don't play it. We use music that instills positive values but not some of the music they listen to outside of the school is not really for their level. It has adult content. Personally I do not teach that music because it reinforces negative behavior. There might be a disconnect at some other schools too but to what extent I am not sure. Presently too, the music and media greatly impact the students.

M: Along with that, how would you say the popular music community influences the students?

P8: Jamaica is a community with a strong dancehall culture and that stems from the sound systems that operate in the community. Sound systems are these things with large amplified speaker boxes that play loud music in the community. So the students hear what is happening.

M: Would you say that educating students in the subject of music influences the community at all? Do you think the lessons taught here influence them?

P8: It will impact a small percentage of students. What we are fighting against is anytime you reinforce a particular behavior, when the students go back outside the boundaries of the school, they are going to be influenced by what is happening there. So it is like a tug of war between the two. Those students who go all the way through the CXC program will be the ones who influence the community the most because many of them will become professional musicians. They will broaden their scope will not be pinned down by just one genre. They will listen worldwide to see what is going on. Not everybody in Jamaica is drawn to dancehall or reggae. Some persons love the American music, others love classical. Then again the different denominations we have in the country play a significant role in the music. For example there are Anglican, Protestant, Catholic, Monrovia, those persons tend to be drawn toward the European type of music. Those from the evangelical churches, Baptist churches, and so on, will tend to be drawn to American music. A lot of these churches have headquarters in the United States. Here at the school maybe 70-80% are affiliated with a religious institution so that will effect the music too. A lot of the time, the dancehall and reggae music is being played in the churches because a lot of artists have become Christianized.

M: If you had to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 with one being not important to 10 being extremely important, how important is music education to the school curriculum?

P8: In my opinion, its 50/50. I would say 5 in value is placed on the subject in some schools to the extent where it is only utilized when there are functions or performances. There may be a need for students to perform in order to enhance the function so emphasis would be placed on the subject at that time. However, my case at this school here, I would say 8 or so because the principal is very supportive when it comes to the music program. Music can be used as a means to market the school nationally so it brings recognition to the institution. For example, when we have national choir competitions and so on, the school willingly participates and provides the finances needed. The school is generally supportive when I need a new instrument or need something repaired.

M: You said the principal is really supportive here. In other schools where the principal is not as supportive, is the program not as strong?

P8: It is not as strong as it should be. In fact some of them stop the program at grade 8 and goes no further. Others stop at grade 9 but here go all the way through grade 11. At grade 10 the students have the option to be in the specialist program where they learn to play a specific instrument or sing. You will find that it varies nationally. A challenge that we face is there

are not enough music teachers. Most people who go on to the national college to be trained prefer to go into performance rather than education.

M: What is the goal of music education in Jamaica?

P9: The goal of music education is two fold: One has been through the initiation of the music perfect pitch program through First Global Bank so it should help to increase literacy and numeracy skills. The other side of music education is basically exposing children to music, helping them to play instruments, becoming prepared to do music and high school and if they are interested, to do music at the university level.

M: Would you say that music education is secondary to other subjects taught in the school like math, and reading or is it on the same level? What have you seen?

P9: In Jamaica I find that it is secondary because even when people ask me what I do and I tell them I am a music teacher, they look at me strange, although, music is integrated especially in grades 1-3. Other than that, grades 4, 5, and 6, you sometimes find that children don't do well and they say, oh it is the music brings down their grades. Sometimes the students don't see the importance of studying music just as hard as the other subjects. So that's something that I as a music teacher and something as a society we have to develop the arts education and show it is just as important as other subjects. Right now it is not seem as the same level.

M: Should music be taught as a means to reinforce the other subjects or should it be taught as a subject by itself? Should there be a mix between the two?

P9: I think a mix is good but music should have its own value. It shouldn't be valued solely on the basis that it can help literacy and numeracy. Personally, I'm in music because I've always been good at it from a from a child and I never thought oh I'm better at math or I'm better at english just because. I'm just as oriented that way and if other children are, they should be able to pursue that and not feel they are less than any other student.

M: How are the Jamaican national standards for music education viewed in the public school systems? Are they something that is taken very seriously? Are they just suggestions? What do you do?

P9: I've been doing my own research just looking at how music is structured in other countries and when I compare it to what we have, it is not as detailed because I find especially like grades 1-3 where you are asked to integrate it based on the lesson. For instance if you are doing a unit about families, you're supposed to find a way to teach concepts surrounding families using music. Fine you teach them songs, you might teach them about instrument families as a way as connecting as well, but that's me here. A music teacher in other schools might not do it like that. So then you find that there is no standard at least in that way. There isn't similarity across the primary schools and I don't think that's good because what happens is when the children reach to grade 4 and they have to do discrete music, they might not be as prepared to take on some of those things because it is really left up to the teacher to make sure that what ever activities she planned in grades 1-3 prepares their listening skills,

things that have to do with rhythm, instruments, that kind of thing. So if it was a discrete subject from grades 1-3, I think they would be better prepared to do it grade 4, 5, and 6. So the standards are somewhat lacking.

M: Tell me about your lessons that you use. Do you incorporate the national standards? What genres of music do you teach? What types of instruments? So on.

P9: I stick very closely to the standards as they are. In terms of the types of music that I integrate, I try to expose the children to a lot of what is Jamaican because believe it or not they don't know. They might hear the dancehall and the reggae a lot but in terms of the traditional styles like the folk music and the mento, those kind of things, they're not really exposed to those. Unfortunately there is not a lot of material that music teachers can easily access. Other styles now like jazz or ragtime, don't usually do that. There are some constraints in terms of time because my classes are only half an hour. The kind of things you want to do in a music class, I think they should not be less than 45 minutes. Because of the dictations of the curriculum and whatever else, we only get half an hour. So I tend to have to focus on things not only for music class but also for what is on national exams. For the grade 6 exam especially, GSAT, there are some topics in music and they need to know about Jamaica. In terms of styles my thing is pretty mainstream.

M: What are some of the pedagogical techniques you use for your lessons? Focusing more on the teaching part and not solely on content. Is your teaching style more like a lecture? More student based?

P9: Definitely has to be student based because a lot of the classes have a lot of boys. I have to incorporate a little bit of lecture and then the students do something like learn about a rhythm and then play it. Usually there is a mix.

M: Is there a disconnect between music taught in the schools and the cultural music of Jamaica?

P9: I know we have a music coordinator from the Ministry but he doesn't give teachers a lot of resources. You are kind of left up to your own so there is a lot of disconnect. We do have [professional development] workshops but rarely is there one for music so there is no continuation or development as there should be.

M: Does educating students in music influences the community and if so in what ways?

P9: It absolutely does. Jamaicans are just naturally musical. In terms of being disciplined about it is a totally different issue. They usually gravitate to wanting to learn the reggae instead of classical which I try to incorporate sometimes. The community loves music. Every month our choir sings at the community church, or conferences, sometimes the ministry has functions and asks us to sing. It is an important part, however, even though they call us to do that sort of thing, they don't give it the importance that it should have. So its kind of like we are just there to fill a function and that's it.

M: How does the community influence the program here? Does it effect it? Are students involved?

P9: The school community influences the kind of music that I do here. The teachers give a lot of support especially going to festivals or going to different functions. Sometimes they write the songs so our school community definitely influences it. Other than that, I don't really see as much of an influence. Except some parents might be involved when they want to have their child take music lessons or something like that.

M: On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being not important to 10 being extremely important, how important is music education in the curriculum in your own opinion?

P9: It's a 10. I'm going to be biased but it is very important. I think about my own experience, I was a very shy person. Music has helped me to have self confidence, it has helped me to explore, and to just have that desire to learn. So if that wasn't there, for sure I know the boys would have a problem because the boys love drumming and they are active. If there weren't drumming classes, if there weren't music classes, there would be a really big problem. Even the teachers will tell you that in the middle of their lessons, they are drumming. It is a part of our culture. And if it is a natural part of our culture, it should be part of our education.

M: Where on that scale do you think it actually is right now?

P9: Right now I think it is a 5. There is a struggle between we know it is important but we are not sure how to put it there. The ministry has not taken up the mandate to put it there where it should be.

M: Any closing comments?

P9: I would love to see more volunteers come down and share their expertise. I find that a lot of times through the internet I have to look at how you all teach music and incorporate some of that so it would be nice even if a team of you come and do workshops, that kind of thing because we don't have that here.